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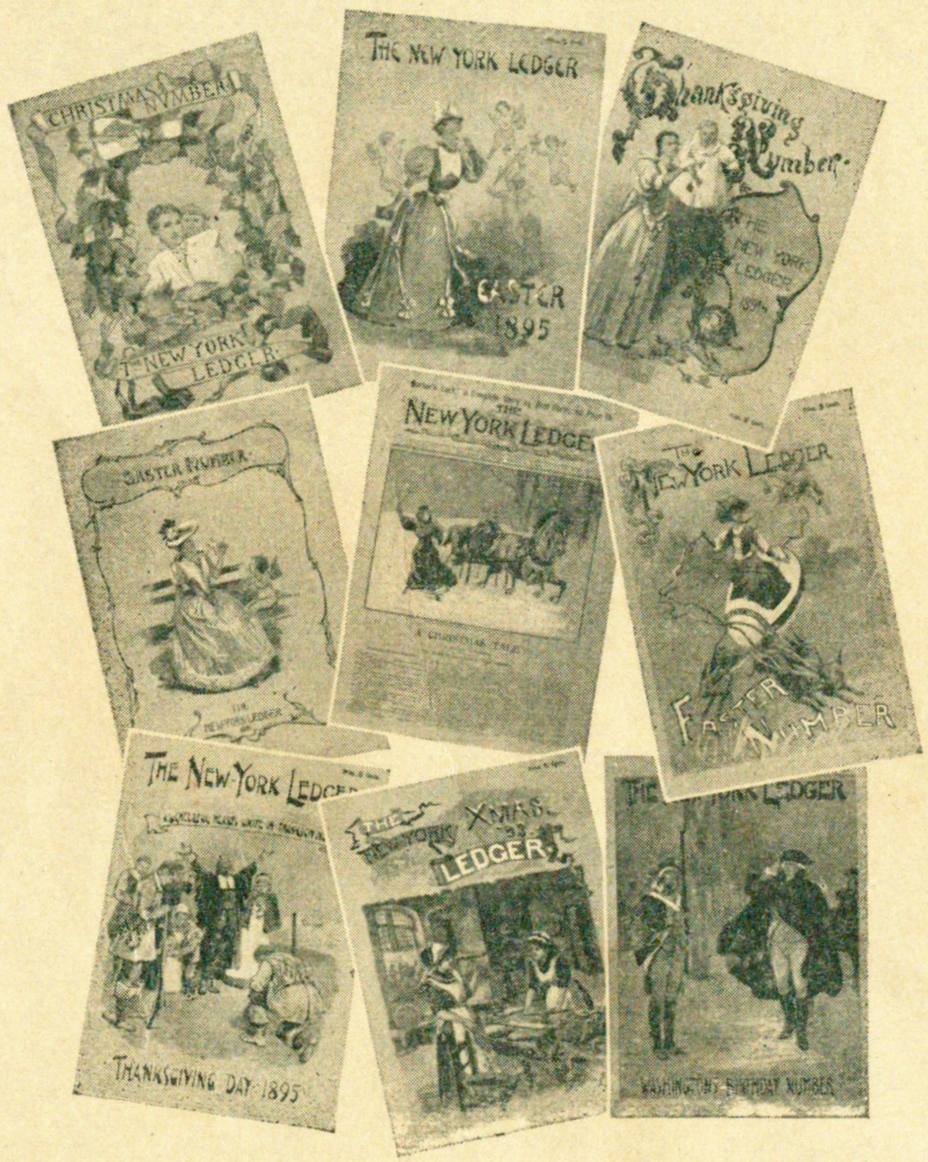
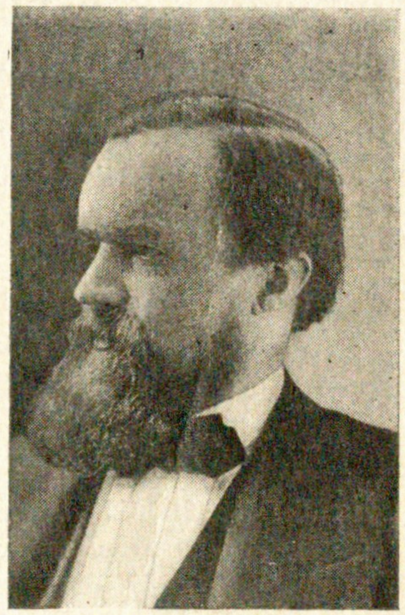

Reproduction of some of the cover pages of the Special Numbers of the NEW YORK LEDGER in its new form, and also a reproduction of the front page of the regular edition.

Some Interesting Facts Regarding Mr. Robert Bonner and the Ledger From the Beginning to the Present.

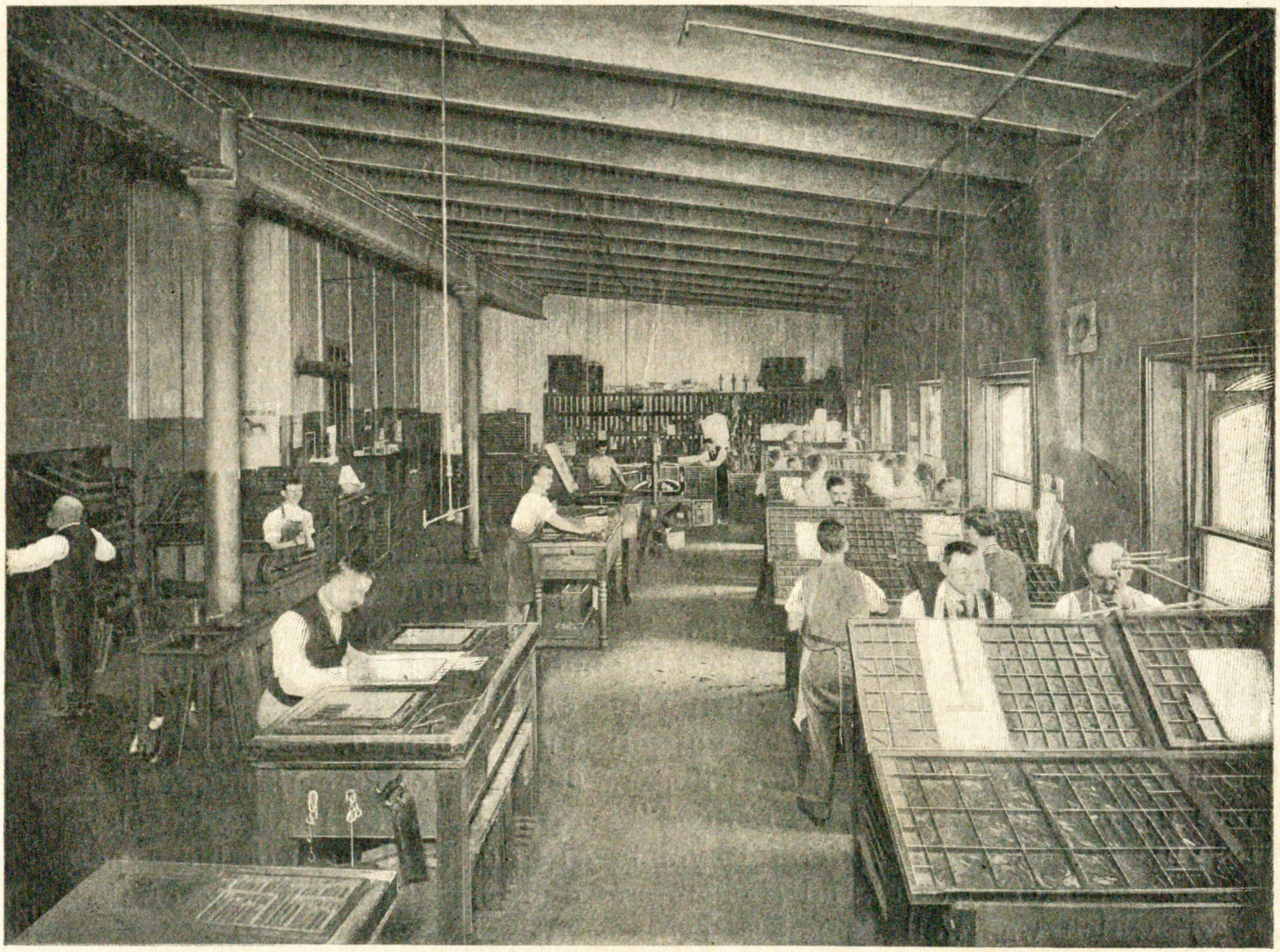
ROBERT BONNER, the founder of the *New York Ledger*, was born in Ramelton, in the North of Ireland, and belongs to the sturdy Scotch-Irish race. When he landed in New York with but a sovereign in his pocket he had in his habits, his character and his enterprising spirit the potentiality of success, which time enabled him gloriously to realize. He went to Hartford, Connecticut, where, on the outskirts of the city, his mother's brother lived. He entered the office of the *Hartford Courant* as an apprentice. He learned there not only the trade of the printer and the business of a publisher, but the skill of an editor. After acquiring his trade, he came to New York in 1844,



ROBERT BONNER.

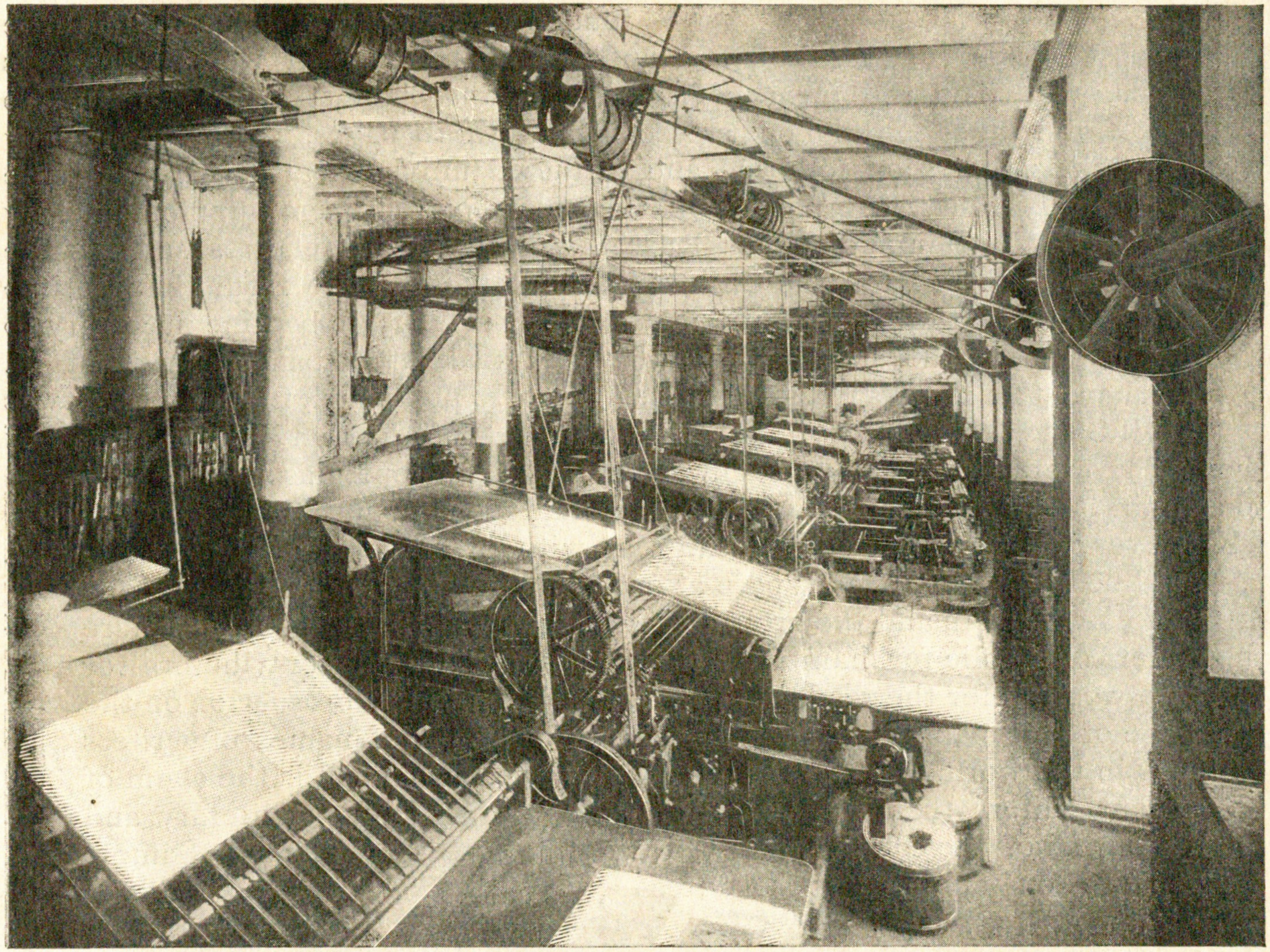
and entered the office of the *American Republican* as a compositor, and subsequently renewed his connection with the *Hartford Courant* as its New York correspondent. In 1850 he took charge of the printing of the *Merchants' Ledger*, of which he subsequently became the proprietor and changed to the *New York Ledger*. This change was the first step in the direction of the great success in weekly journalism which he was destined to make. Early in the year 1855 Mr. Bonner announced that he had engaged Fanny Fern to write a story for his paper at $100.00 a column. He then proceeded to advertise this story on a scale which astonished the whole country, and into it he put every

penny that he had in the world, and it was a great success. Mr. Bonner's method of advertising his paper was as original as his course in conducting it in other respects. One day he sent a short sentence to the publisher of the *New York Tribune*, with directions to repeat it in the usual type of the paper to fill the space of one page. The publisher of the *Tribune* returned the advertisement, stating that he could not open the paper to such a form of advertising. In some way Mr. Bennett, of the *Herald*, learned of the incident, and sent word to Mr. Bonner that he could repeat his advertisement in any issue of the *Herald* in any form and to any extent that he desired. The *Herald* was then an eight-page paper. Mr. Bonner at once sent his advertisement to the *Herald*, with an order for eight pages, or the whole paper. Mr. Bennett grasped the situation and doubled the size of the *Herald*, giving Mr. Bonner his eight pages and the readers eight pages in addition. It is worthy of remark that the editor and publisher of the *Ledger* had no further trouble in getting all the space in the daily papers that he chose to occupy with his advertisements. The number of the *Ledger* containing the first chapters of Fanny Fern's story, June 9, 1856, had a sale of 50,000 copies. He announced that he meant to leave no stone unturned until he got 100,000 readers, and he didn't. His announcements of new attractions in the paper continued from week to week, and stimulated popular curiosity until he had 100,000 readers. Then came the publication of the "Gunmaker of Moscow," "Orion, the Gold-Beater," and the wonderful series of stories by Sylvanus Cobb and Emerson Bennett, which put up the circulation to 150,000. This Mr. Bonner celebrated by a salute of 150 guns in City Hall Park, which caused a



THE COMPOSING ROOM, OCCUPYING THE FIFTH FLOOR.

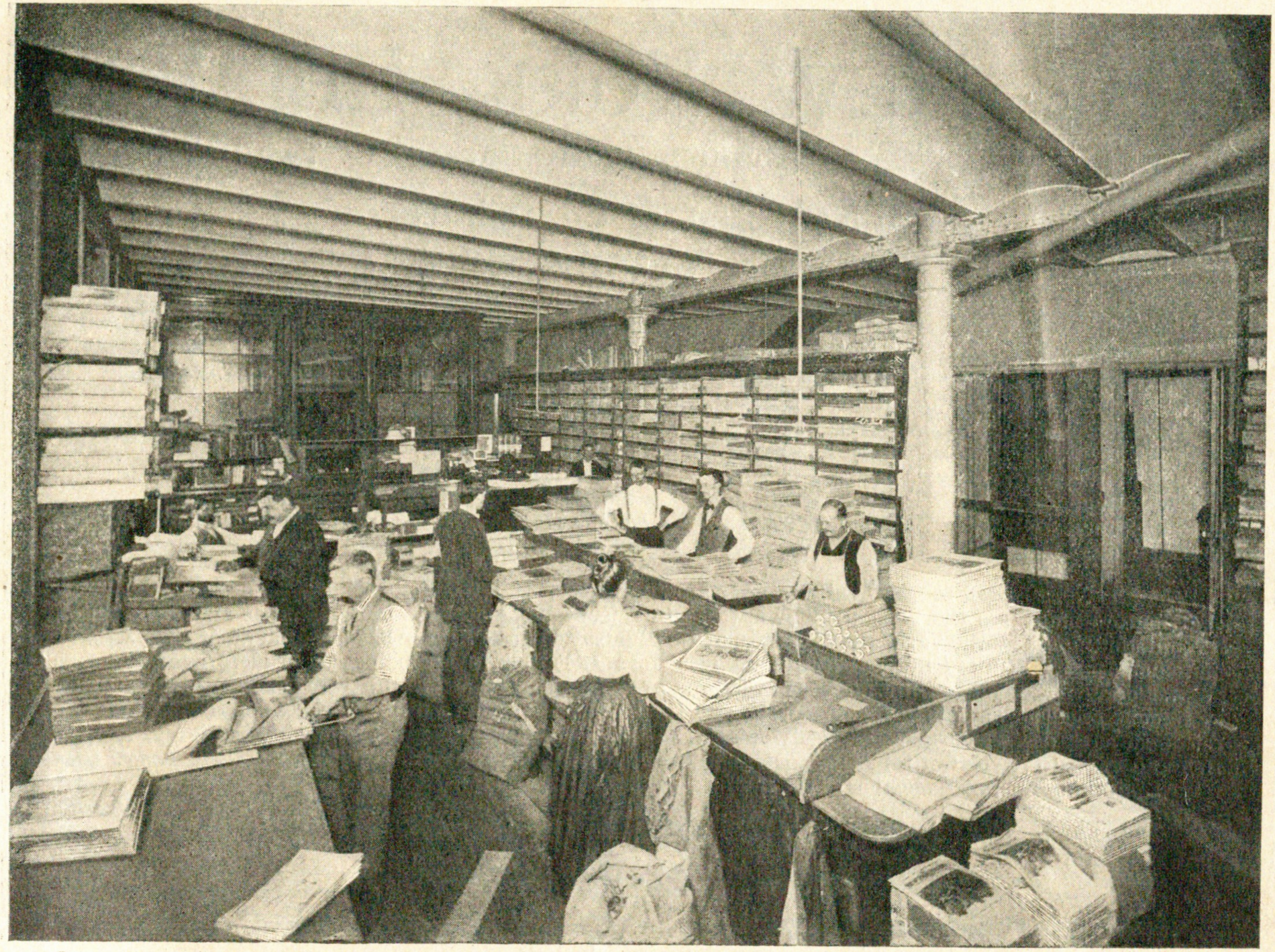
local excitement, and the sound of the cannonading reached the extremest bounds of the municipality, Greater New York then having a smaller periphery. Mrs. Southworth began to contribute in 1857, and proved a strong attraction. In the meantime Mr. Bonner had enlarged his circle of contributors greatly, and embraced nearly all the popular literary men of that day. Among them were John G. Saxe, George D. Prentice, Frederick S. Cozzens and N. P. Willis. Mr. Edward Everett was then delivering his orations in great cities for the benefit of the Mount Vernon Fund. The happy thought of securing him as a contributor occurred to Mr. Bonner. He knew Mr. Everett would scarcely consent to write for money, so he offered $10,000.00 to the Mount Vernon Fund if Mr. Everett would consent to write an article for each number of the *Ledger* during the following year, 1859. The great statesman was caught by this tempting offer, which gratified the dearest wish of his heart to secure Mount Vernon as a heritage of patriotism to his country for all time. Mr. Bonner advertised the Mount Vernon Papers in a manner to secure the largest returns. There was an unparalleled interest aroused in the public mind, and when the publication began the circulation of the paper was doubled, and during the ensuing year exceeded 400,000 copies, something at that time entirely unprecedented. Henry Ward Beecher was one of the star contributors, and at Mr. Bonner's suggestion wrote his delightful novel, "Norwood," for the *Ledger*. Horace Greeley wrote his Autobiography, giving to young America the benefit of his experience as a son of poverty and a champion of labor in the columns of the *Ledger*, which was well named "Recollections of a Busy Life." In 1887,



A SECTION OF THE PRESSROOM.

the *New York Ledger* was given by its founder, Mr. Robert Bonner, to his three sons, who now conduct the paper under the firm name of Robert Bonner's Sons. In 1890 the form of the paper was changed from the quarto sheet of 8 pages to the modern-size sheet with 16 pages. The two literary sensations that soon followed and attracted universal attention were the beautifully illustrated poems, in the shape of four-page supplements, by John G. Whittier and James Russell Lowell. New features, such as the Woman's World Page, the Children's Column, etc., have from time to time been added to the paper, until at the close of 1895 it became necessary to again enlarge the size of the *Ledger* and make it 20 pages instead of 16. Perhaps the most successful novel recently published in the *Ledger* was Hall Caine's "Manxman." Thus it will be noticed that in the history of the *Ledger* there have been no backward steps. The paper has never ceased to contain the writings of the greatest men and women, and to be a paper which every one, young and old, can read with profit as well as pleasure. It would be impossible in the space at our command to give any idea of the army of contributors and the array of attractions which it has spread before the American public for half a century. For our list of contributors for 1897, we would refer the reader of this brief sketch to the prospectus on the last page of this pamphlet. A glance at the long list of names of writers eminent in the world of letters will show how well grounded is the claim of its present editors that the *Ledger* of to-day is the foremost literary and family journal of the country, and worthy of its great popularity. Sample copies free on application. Address

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS, Editors and Proprietors,
Ledger Building, New York City.



ONE OF THE MAILING ROOMS, LOOKING TOWARD THE BUSINESS OFFICES AND EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Prospectus of America's Greatest Family Paper for 1897.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

20 Pages Each Week. Beautifully Illustrated. Two Dollars a Year.

Our New List of Contributors:

Among Whom Are the World's Most Celebrated Authors:

A. Conan Doyle,
J. M. Barrie,
Bret Harte,
Louise Chandler Moulton,
Seward W. Hopkins,
Frank R. Stockton,
Mary Kyle Dallas,
Stanley J. Weyman,
Anthony Hope,
Mrs. Alexander,
Charles Kelsey Gaines,
Rudyard Kipling,
Elizabeth Olmis,
Brander Matthews,
Maxwell Gray,
Hamlin Garland,
Sarah Grand,
Max Pemberton,
Duffield Osborne,
Owen Wister,
Stephen Crane,
Will Lisenbee,
Julian Hawthorne,
S. R. Crockett,
Florence Warden,
S. Baring Gould,
Ralph H. Shaw,
The Duchess,
John R. Musick,
Joel Chandler Harris,
Howard Fielding,
Fiona Macleod,
Charles B. Lewis,
Prof. Felix L. Oswald,
Rev. Dr. John Hall,
Rev. S. Parkes Cadman,
Charles F. Holder,
"Ouida,"
Sarah Orne Jewett,
Effie Adelaide Rowlands,
Mrs. N. S. Stowell,
Barbara Kent,
Elizabeth C. Winter,
Eben E. Rexford.

The *New York Ledger* for 1897 will present a greater variety of attractions than ever before. Its list of contributors embraces the most popular authors in Europe and America. In the number and character of its contributions and the variety and beauty of its illustrations, the *Ledger* has no equal among the weekly periodicals of the United States. In its enlarged form it is able to lay before its readers every week a greater quantity of interesting matter in the form of serials, short stories, illustrated sketches, and articles by famous preachers and men of science, than any paper in the world. All its old and valuable features are retained, such as the Correspondence, Woman's World, Children's Column, Scientific Miscellany, and its rich and varied articles on topics of general interest, poetry and household information. The *Ledger* contains something for every member of the family. Address

ROBERT BONNER'S SONS, Publishers and Proprietors.

Ledger Building, New York City.

PRESS OF THE NEW YORK LEDGER.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

CALENDAR FOR 1897.

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LEDGER BUILDING